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... a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service

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December Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term December average:

Great Lakes Basin 64%

Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair) 98%

Lake Superior 50%

Lakes Michigan-Huron 56%

Lake Ontario 77%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

December Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term December average:

LEVEL news

Canada's Network for Water Level Information

Volume 6, Number 1 **January 7, 1998**

Dry Weather Continues Over Great Lakes Basin

Water Levels Decline Rapidly on Upper Great Lakes

Water levels on Lakes Superior, Huron and St. Clair declined quickly during December. Very dry conditions persisted throughout the month, with minimal rainfall and snowfall in most of these areas.

Despite below average outflows from Lake Superior during December, the lake's level declined more than average. The combination of relatively low inflows from Lake Superior into Lake Huron and little precipitation contributed to a much greater than average decline in Huron's level during the month. Meanwhile, the decline in Lake Huron's level and low local inflow resulted in Lake St. Clair's level declining at a time of year when its level is often static. The decrease in water levels on Lakes Huron and St. Clair over the past several months has considerably reduced the risk of severe damages to shore properties in the event of storms prior to the formation of shorefast ice.

At the end of December, Lake Superior's level was only five cm above average, while Lakes Huron and St. Clair were 38 and 47 cm above average, respectively. Further declines in the levels of Lakes Superior and Huron are likely, but Lake St. Clair may be near the low end of its annual cycle.

The water levels of Lakes Erie and Ontario changed little during December. Both of these lakes are probably at the low end of their annual cycle, although modest further declines are possible if dry conditions continue. Lake Erie was about 50 cm above average, while Lake Ontario was three cm above average at month's end.

An article in the November *Level News* expressed concern that severe storms could be associated with El Niño. So far this fall and winter, there has been a noticeable absence of prolonged high wind events over the Great Lakes. The largest storm surge at Port Colborne over the past two months was 60 cm, which is much less than usual.

Lake Superior	87%
Lake Erie	117%
Lake Huron	111%
Lake Ontario	122%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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